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ABSTRACT

The La Colina Teacher Center had a live-in supervisor who taught part of the day and worked in teacher education part of the day. The general goals for this unique situation were to: 1) increase the contact the supervisor had with student teachers and cooperating teachers, 2) better integrate the student teachers into the school's program, 3) increase the faculty's appreciation of the student teachers, and 4) provide the student teachers with a wider range of educational experiences than they would have otherwise had. Results of a questionnaire sent to participating student teachers indicated that they found the situation positive. Supervisors and cooperating teachers also benefitted. The La Colina Center model provided not only an excellent setting for teaching trainees but also the potential for upgrading and renewing teacher educators' effectiveness. (CJ)

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THE LA COLINA CENTER

A TEACHING CENTER WITH A TEACHING DIRECTOR

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THE LA COLINA CENTER: A TEACHING CENTER
WITH A TEACHING DIRECTOR

Teaching Centers are here to stay! The literature is replete with accounts of various organizations reporting their successful experiences with different models of centers. While there are many variations on the teaching center theme, the definition put forth by McGeoch and Quinn (1975) is applicable to virtually all models. "A Teacher Education Center is created when a school or schools agree to work cooperatively with a university for a specific period of time. The university supervisor becomes a clinical professor spending the greater part of his/her time in the school working with the school staff and students assigned from the university."

This report is concerned with a teaching center program which fits the above definition and yet appears to be unique. The La Colina Center had a director of student teaching experiences employed by the University of California, Santa Barbara, who was also employed by the Santa Barbara (California) School District to teach three classes in the junior high school. Thus, the La Colina Center had a live-in supervisor who taught part of the day and worked in teacher education part of the day. Schmieder and Yarger (1974) reviewed seven organizational types of teaching centers, and the La Colina Center does not seem to fit into any of their categories. Collings (1974) presented a cross-section of center case studies, and none had a supervisor teaching secondary level classes. Thus, this report offers a case study of a teacher center, while not necessarily better or worse than other centers, at least is different from previous models.

The La Colina Center operated in three different ways from the usual student teaching experiences at U.C.S.B. First, a larger than usual number of student teachers were placed at one school. Due to La Colina Junior High's instructional program being based on a team teaching approach with emphasis on individualized learning, student teachers had a somewhat different role than in more traditional settings. They were not expected to "take-over" and replace the teacher, but rather join the team and function more as a co-teacher. This arrangement provided the student teacher with a team experience, gave them the opportunity to work with more than one teacher and the opportunity to plan instructional programs with other people

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(both supervising teachers and other student teachers), instead of always planning in isolation. To further broaden his field experiences, each student teacher was expected to plan and execute one unit or "mini-course" on his own. Thus, each student teacher received both types of experience; team teaching and the more self-contained classroom.

A second departure from the tradtional student teaching was the immediate availability of the University Supervisor. While he taught the first three periods of the day, he had a student teacher himself and was frequently available for observation and consultation. During the rest of the day his total responsibility was working with the student teaching program. Thus, he was in the school all day, each day - either teaching or working directly with the student teachers. One of the major objectives of the center operation(see below) was to increase the University Supervisor's contacts with the student teachers and the cooperating teachers. His constant presence in the school did indeed make a difference in his contacts with all groups of people.

The third departure from the traditional approach was found in the seminar program. In the past, seminars were held by the University Supervisor weekly to discuss problems of general concern. At La Colina, seminars were held twice a week, usually meeting before school and occasionally after school. The seminars were of three types. One type was a general problems seminar where student teachers could explore and discuss particular problems and educational concerns. These seminars were conducted by the University Supervisor who also provided instructional input on topics of general concern. During the semester, twelve such seminars were held. A second type of seminar provided input regarding the school's philosophy, programs, and services. During the semester, three administrators and two staff members met with the student teachers for six different seminars. A third type of seminar was conducted by La Colina faculty members who provided instruction in areas of their particular expertise. Although topics covered a wide range of concerns, emphasis was placed on techniques of indiviudalizing instruction. During the semester, eight seminars were conducted by faculty members. This aspect of the program is similar to one reported by McGeoch and Quinn (1975). At St. John's University in Queens, New York, students spend one-half day each week in seminars, some of which were conducted by school personnel.

The general goals of the La Colina Center were to:

A. Increase the contact the University Supervisor had with the student teachers and supervising teachers.

B. Better integrate the student teachers into the school's program.

C. Increase the faculty's appreciation of the student teachers.

D. Provide the student teachers with a wider range of educational experiences than they would otherwise have.

Although the Center was conducted all year, data included in this report are based only on the fall semester. During the fall, there were thirteen social studies student teachers, six in science, one in French, one in girls' P.E. and one in art. Although the University Supervisor had official responsibility for the social studies student teachers only, all were expected to attend the seminars, as well as student teachers in the building from Westmont College.

SPECIFIC GOALS AND RESULTS

1. Increase the contact the University Supervisor has with the student teachers and supervising teachers.

The University Supervisor had characterized the types of contacts into six categories: (a) observation - the student teacher was not teaching; (b) observation - with no conference immediately following; (c) observation - followed with a conference; (d) conference - with the student teachers; (e) conference - with the supervising teacher; and (f) three-way conference. Records had been kept of the University Supervisor's activities for five previous terms and were available for comparison with the contacts at the Teaching Center. Table 1 indicates the comparison of contacts with the means of the previous five terms used for comparison.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Number of University Supervisor Contacts with Student Teachers and Supervising Teachers during Different Terms

	La Colina Center	Mean of Five Previous Terms
Observation (S.T. non tch.)	11	17
Observation (no conf. held)	18	32
Observation (with conf.)	53	49
Conference (with S.T.)	125	44
Conference (Sup. Tch.)	80	51
3-way Conf.	0	13

The figures represent the total number of each type of contact for the first eight week period of each term.

As Table 1 indicates, there was an increase in three categories of contact, two of which are considered to be especially important; and a decrease in three categories, two of which are of lesser importance. During the first eight weeks of the experimental program, there were a total of 258 conferences while a comparable period of previous terms indicate a mean of 157 conferences. This comparison becomes more striking when it is remembered that the University Supervisor was supervising half time at the Center and full time in the previous terms. The Teaching Center arrangement did in fact increase the contacts of the University Supervisor.

2. The resident University Supervisor should be of aid to the non-social studies student teachers in the building.

Although the University Supervisor was not responsible for the non-social studies student teachers, he did attempt to be of aid to them by including them in the seminars and being available for conferences on

problems they were having. There is no available measure of the absolute value of his aid; however, he was involved in 53 conferences with student teachers and supervising teachers during the first eight weeks of the fall term. Due to his immediate presence, he did deal with several problems that would, otherwise, not have been immediately attended to.

3. The seminars should be of value and expose the student teachers to topics, otherwise, omitted from their training.

A wide range of topics were included in the seminars, including a broader orientation to the school than student teachers usually receive. Although no hard data are available on the actual value of the seminars, student teachers' reactions to the seminars are available. In early November, the student teachers were asked to rate each of the previous seminars on a five point scale. Table 2 displays a summary of this evaluation.

TABLE 2

Ratings by Student Teachers of Value of Seminars Held Prior to Nov. 1.	
	Number of Responses
Very Positive	95
Somewhat Positive	61
Neutral	32
Somewhat Negative	0
Very Negative	0

As Table 2 shows, the seminars were judged by the student teachers to have been of value. The complete absence of any negative responses indicates a favorable reception. This evaluation was taken before the term was over so that adjustments could be made if necessary. No similar evaluation was made at the completion of the term; however, it should be a safe assumption that the reactions would be at least as favorable.

4. The student teachers should feel they benefited from the support of their supervising teachers.

While no data exists on the absolute value of the supervising teachers' training to student teachers, data are available on the student teachers' perceptions of the supervising teachers. Near the completion of the semester,

a questionnaire was administered to the student teachers. Table 3 illustrates the results of the questionnaire which pertain to the supervising teachers.

TABLE 3

Social Studies Student Teachers Questionnaire Results Relative to Supervising Teachers

1. To what degree did your master teacher actively attempt to give you aid and training (instead of merely acting as host)?

great degree			moderate			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 6.0

2. To what degree did you feel he was interested in your problems and growth?

great degree			moderate			not interested
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 6.7

3. What was the value of his aid and training?

great value			moderate			no value
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 6.3

4. To what degree did he provide you with needed materials and facilities?

great degree			moderate			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 6.1

5. How much of his own time (includes prep period) did he spend with you?

great amount			moderate			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 5.7

6. To what degree do you feel he is a good trainer of student teachers?

great degree			moderate			not
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 6.4

It may be inferred from the above table that the student teachers viewed their supervising teachers in a very favorable light and felt they benefited from their training.

5. The student teachers should feel they benefited from the support of the University supervisor.

As was the case with assessing the value of the supervising teachers' training, the only data available on the University Supervisor are the perceptions of the student teachers. Table 4 displays a summary of the student teacher questionnaire results.

TABLE 4

Social Studies Student Teachers Questionnaire Results
Relative to the University Supervisor

1. To what degree did he attempt to give aid and training?

great degree			moderate			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 6.3

2. To what degree do you feel he was interested in your problems and growth?

great degree			moderate		not interested	
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 6.7

3. What was the value of his aid and training?

great value			moderate			no value
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 6.0

4. To what degree did he attempt to expose you to different teaching approaches and to educational concerns of the school?

great degree			moderate			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 6.1

5. How much time did he make available to work with you?

great amount			moderate			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 6.0

6. To what degree do you feel he is a good trainer of student teachers?

great degree			moderate			not
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 6.3

As with the supervising teachers, the University Supervisor was viewed by the student teachers in a favorable light and felt they benefited from his efforts. While this University Supervisor may have received comparable ratings in different setting and other University Supervisors may have, also, received comparable ratings, the ratings presented in Table 4 do indicate a favorable note for the La Colina Center.

6. The student teachers should feel they were supported and aided by the administration and faculty of the public school.

This objective was considered to have the potential of being especially illuminating. While student teachers in other schools may, also, view their supervising teachers and University Supervisors favorably, if a pattern emerged which separated the Center at La Colina from other schools, then substantial inferences may be drawn regarding the effectiveness of the Center. The questionnaire administered to La Colina student teachers was also administered to other student teachers and included five questions pertinent to their perceptions of the public school support. The questions to which the student teachers responded were:

1. To what degree did the school administrative staff make you feel welcome and attempt to help you?
2. To what degree did the teaching staff (other than your supervising teacher) make you feel welcome and attempt to help you?
3. To what degree do you feel this school is a good site for training student teachers?
4. To what degree do you feel you were acquainted with the objectives and philosophy of the school?
5. To what degree did you feel comfortable in the school?

Table 5 presents the results of student teachers' reactions. The same scale as previously presented (a one through seven, with seven high) was used for the questions listed above.

TABLE 5

Means of Student Teachers' Reactions to Public School Support - Comparison of La Colina Student Teachers with Other Schools.

	Other Schools Student Teachers	La Colina Social Studies Student Teachers	La Colina non-Social Studies Student Teachers	Total La Colina
1.	4.1	6.3	5.6	5.9
2.	4.8	6.3	5.6	5.9
3.	5.6	7.0	5.6	6.3
4.	5.4	6.3	4.6	5.4
5.	5.3	6.7	5.4	6.1

The means in Table 5 indicate that the student teachers in La Colina had a more favorable reaction to the public school than did student teachers in other schools. Of the La Colina student teachers, the social studies ones especially responded favorably; perhaps an explanation is that the Unviersity Supervisor in charge of the Center was in social studies.

7. The supervising teachers should feel their instructional program was enhanced by the presence of student teachers.

At the completion of the fall semester a questionnaire was administered to the entire faculty. The questions were designed to elicit the degree of positive and negative student teacher effects on the instructional program and the areas of effects. Table 6 displays the responses of supervising teachers to the questionnaire regarding possible positive effects of student teachers.

TABLE 6

Possible Positive Effects of Student Teachers as Viewed by Supervising Teachers

1. Student teachers enable you to better individualize your teaching.

great deal			somewhat			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 5.7

2. Student teacher brought special knowledge or expertise to class.

great deal			somewhat			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 4.8

3. Student teacher freed you at times to work with individual pupils or for other worthwhile activities.

great deal			some			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 5.9

4. Student teacher introduced new teaching techniques or approaches.

many			some			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 3.1

5. Student teacher provided worthwhile help with group management.

often			some			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 4.8

6. Presence of student teacher enabled pupils to receive a variety of teaching styles and approaches.

very helpful			somewhat helpful			of no value
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 5.1

7. The presence of another adult in the room helped in general make the teaching more effective.

very helpful			somewhat helpful			no help
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 5.6

8. In summary, to what degree did the presence of your student teacher enhance your instructional program?

very positive			neutral			very negative
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 5.6

In order to obtain a more complete overview of student teacher effects, the faculty questionnaire included items of possible negative effects. Table 7 indicates the questions and supervising teachers' responses.

TABLE 7

Possible Negative Effects of Student Teachers as Viewed by Supervising Teachers

1. The student teacher interferred with your teaching objectives or approaches.

severe			moderate			no problem
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 1.5

2. The student teacher caused your pupils to be exposed to poor teaching practices or incorrect information.

much			some			never
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 2.1

3. The presence of your student teacher resulted in some confusion for your pupils due to their having two teachers in the same class.

much			some			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 1.7

4. Your student teacher lowered the general teacher image or professional standards.

greatly			some			none
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 1.3

5. The amount of time you had to spend with your student teacher caused you to neglect your pupils.

much			some			never
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

mean - 2.1

As Tables 6 and 7 indicate, the supervising teachers clearly felt that substantial advantages accrued from the presence of student teachers and very minimal negative effects. The means of possible negative effects become especially striking when it is noted that a score of one on the scale represented none or never; thus actual possible negative scores may be viewed

as the mean score above 1.0. While no data are available on the views of supervising teachers in other schools, such a comparison may be illuminating.

8. Faculty members other than supervising teachers should feel the presence of student teachers benefited the school.

Since a goal of the Center was to increase the involvement of student teachers in the total school, it was felt that the views of all faculty members should be considered. The faculty questionnaire included the following section:

> For teachers who did not serve as regular supervising teachers this semester. Did the presence of student teachers have any effect on your instructional program? If yes, please indicate what positive and negative effects there were.

The majority of teachers in this category felt the presence of student teachers had no effect on them or their instructional program. Five teachers did report positive effects, and two teachers reported negative effects. The negative comments stated that the student teachers caused crowded conditions for the lunch room, telephone, ditto machine, and restrooms.

Most of the student teachers spent some time in other classrooms, either as observers or aides. In order to receive the preceptions of teachers who were exposed to student teachers in these roles, the following section was included in the faculty questionnaire:

> For teachers who had student teachers spend time in your classes as an aide or observer. Please indicate any positive and negative effects on your instructional program.

Nine teachers responded to this section. One said there were no negative effects, but that he was pleased to have student teachers observe as the experience broadened their exposure to different teaching techniques. The other eight teachers who responded felt there were positive effects for themselves and the class. No negative effects were reported.

The results of these two sections of the faculty questionnaire lead to two basic conclusions:

1. The majority of teachers not directly involved with student teachers felt student teachers had no effect on them or their instructional program.
2. Far more teachers felt the student teachers had positive effects on their programs than felt there were negative effects.

COMMENTS

The presence of the University Supervisor in the school all day had additional beneficial results. It helped establish in the minds of public school personnel the commitment of the University for the field experiences of its students. It was clear that the University took a serious view of the supervision, and daily presence of the Supervisor was a constant reminder that the student teachers were being supervised.

Because the Supervisor was not moving from school to school each day, he was able to better utilize video tape equipment. One VTR unit was housed at La Colina, and the Supervisor gave instruction in the use of the VTR to the student teachers. Thus, each student teacher had the knowledge and facilities to make use of the VTR in his self-evaluation efforts.

Another benefit of the Supervisor's being in the school all day was his increased awareness of each student teacher's abilities, interests, and needs. This awareness led to his development of a variation in the field experiences. On a trial basis, a "wild card" student teaching assignment was begun. In lieu of one reading assignment (student teachers were required to have two reading classes), a student teacher could elect to work in a different subject area. The intent of the "wild card" assignment was to better individualize each student teacher's program and allow him to broaden his field experiences. This arrangement, also, better integrated the student teacher into the total school and gave additional faculty members the opportunity to work with student teachers. Examples of "wild card" assignment included: an art student teacher who worked in P.E.; a German student who worked in art; and a social studies student who worked with the Learning Disabilities Group. Employment opportunities were, also, enhanced by this individualized approach. Two people obtained positions due to their "wild card" experience, and another by virtue of his experience in working in his minor subject. The arrangement proved so successful that student teachers in other schools were being provided with the opportunity of broadening their field experiences.

A disadvantage of the La Colina Center program was in the University Supervisor's experiencing a time conflict program. In essence, he had two jobs, and the responsibilities of each could consume his full time. Even though he had two employers, a conflict in loyalties or priorities did not develop. The problem was that when he was doing one job, he was not doing the

other. The problem was exacerbated by the limitations of his teaching schedule which was fixed, absolute, and not subject to manipulation. For instance, the difficulties of working with student teachers during the three periods he was teaching are obvious. In short, the problem of having two jobs caused him to spread his time too thin, thus lessening his effectiveness in both roles. Due to his teaching actual junior high classes, however, he had no credibility problem with the student teachers and supervising teachers. The time conflict problem was actually felt only by the University Supervisor and not by others involved in the program.

An interesting sidelight of the program was that some of the Supervisor's colleagues at the University thought he was a little strange for choosing to go back to a junior high school classroom. The Supervisor felt their attitude was, perhaps, an indication of one of the basic problems with teacher education today. He was gratified to discover that, after an absence of six years from the classroom, he had retained most of his teaching skills. The most overwhelming problem that he had forgotten was the constant time demands on a teacher.

The La Colina Center model has some definite advantages, as well as disadvantages. The mere fact of being in one school full time has tremendous potential for both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. The primary disadvantage is the demands on time of the Supervisor.

In looking beyond the operation of the Center, the greatest benefits may have come from getting the University Instructor back into the classroom. Typically, a supervisor of student teachers starts his career as a classroom teacher, then extricates himself and moves to the university level. Years later, he has forgotten many of his teaching skills and his understanding of the life of a classroom teacher. The La Colina Center model not only provides an excellent setting for teaching trainees, but has the added potential for upgrading and re-newing a teacher educator's effectiveness. As people in teacher education turn more toward teaching centers as the best setting for their students, we should not ignore the potential of centers for the maintenance of our own abilities. The La Colina Center model offers an approach with potential for all of us.

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